

VZCZCXRO0844  
PP RUEHPA  
DE RUEHUJA #0936 1481551  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 281551Z MAY 09 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6136  
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 1395  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0325  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1924  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0879  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 000936

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA  
BAGHDAD FOR DMCCULLOUGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: SENATE REJECTS ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSAL  
FOR REGULATORY COMMISSION BILL

REF: A. ABUJA 794

[1](#)B. ABUJA 517 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N.S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) On May 26 the Senate voted to reject the Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission Act 2009, one of six electoral reform bills President Yar'Adua sent to the National Assembly (NASS). Senators debated the bill for three days before voting it down on the grounds that there is no need to establish a commission solely for the purpose of registration and regulation of political parties. According to press reports, Senators argued that the Bill falls short of the Nigerian public's expectations for electoral reform; Senate President David Mark observed that the registration of political parties is not one of the key problems with Nigeria's electoral process.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The main purpose of the Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission Bill was to reduce the power of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) over political parties, a power which it was accused of having employed to benefit the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2007 elections. However, as some senators pointed out, one of the shortcomings of the proposed commission was that it was to be constituted in the same way as INEC. Just as the governing board of INEC is appointed by the President, the bill also called for members of the proposed Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission to be appointed by the President leaving the door open for the registry to be used and manipulated as INEC is today.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The Senate's rejection of this bill is, at least to some degree, likely a reaction against the Yar'Adua Administration's pursuit of what many see as a sham of electoral reform. The Senators may also have been laying down a marker that they intend to demand a role in the electoral reform process. Whether the National Assembly finally steps up and improves not only its watch dog role on the executive, but simply finally legislates something concrete like good electoral reform remains to be seen. The bottom line is that the list of electoral reforms from the Electoral Reform Committee was drastically cut by the Cabinet, then reduced further by the Council of State (see

ref B), and is now being cut back even more by the Senate. These cuts have removed most of the significant changes recommended by the Electoral Reform Committee last December, and left only a smattering of bits and pieces. However, House Speaker Bankole also claims he wants to have GON electoral reform (see ref A) and the clerk of the House recently asked for the actual Electoral Reform Committee's (ERC) recommendations, which had not been sent to them. We will see what they actually do with the ERC report. End Comment.

14. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.  
SANDERS